DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 633 CS 502 650

AUTHOR Drake, H.
TITLE A Select Survey of Campus Radio Stations.
PUB DATE Apr 75
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern States Speech Association (Tallahassee, FL, April 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Campuses; *Colleges; College Students; Educational Radio; Higher Education; Mass Media; Needs Assessment; *Programing (Broadcast); *Radio; *Southern Schools; Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

To ascertain the continued need for a campus radio station at 10 watts and to justify a subsequent increase in power, the student radio station at Auburn University (Alabama) conducted surveys of college radio stations, emphasizing facilities in the southeast United States. Some of the findings of the surveys indicated that in the southeast and nationally most stations broadcast an appreciable distance from campus and most stations programed for nonstudents as well as for student audiences. The greater number of respondents in all regions indicated that increasing coverage area to serve nonstudent listeners as well as students was the prime rationale for power increases. In the southeast, the greater number of stations programed music for more than 75% of each broadcast day; news/talk represented less than 10% of each program day for the greater number of stations. Also in the southeast, the greater number of stations appointed their management and relied on part-time personnel for staff; financing was through a variety of means; and the three leading university department affiliations for stations were mass communication, speech, and radio/television. (MKM)

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# A SELECT SURVEY OF CAMPUS RADIO STATIONS

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by

H. Drake

(For presentation at the April, 1975 convention of the Southern States Speech Association at Tallahassee, Florida and the April, 1975 convention of the Broadcast Education Association at Las Vegas, Nevada.)

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Auburn University

April, 1975

CS502650

## INTRODUCTION

Auburn University's student financed and operated station, WEGL-FM, is a four year old 10-watt station which is in the process of applying to the Federal Communications Commission for an increase to 250-watts. It took WEGL-FM close to two years to get its licensee--The Board of Trustees--to approve the power increase request. The first official request which was approved by the Communications Board was tabled by the school president for insufficient justification. A stronger portfolio of justification was constructed which included ascertainment data. (Re ascertainment see for example: Edward Krasnow and John Quale, "Ascertainment: The Quest for the Holy Grail," Public Telecommunications Review, June, 1974.) Federal Communications Commissioner Benjamin L. Hooks has recently indicated that the F.C.C. will be taking a closer look at campus radio stations, including 10-watters, and ascertainment will be a major criterion, (November, 1974 Atlanta Regional Conference of the National Association of Broadcasters).

While the following data was collected to aid WEGL-FM in obtaining permission to apply for a power increase, it was believed that the information would also be of interest to other campus broadcast facilities--if for no other reason because it presents a picture of contemporary campus radio stations in the southeast. The southeastern results are also

compared with a survey of select stations in other areas of the United States.

## I. PROCEDURES

Stations In the Southeast:

A questionnaire, (see III), was sent to 111 campus radio stations in the southeast. This number was obtained from the 1973 and 1974 issues of Broadcasting Yearbooks for the following states: Alabama, Florida,Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. For the purposes of this study these states were designated as southeast. Stamped and addressed return envelopes were enclosed. A brief note accompanied the questionnaire stating that the rationale for the survey was to get an indication of the contemporary state of the art. Questionnaires were mailed in mid-and-late May, 1974.

Of the 111 questionnaires sent, seventy-eight were returned, (70 percent).

Stations Outside the Southeast (National):

There were two major exceptions to the above procedures.

First, questionnaires were not sent to every school in each state outside the southeastern states. For the purposes of this study states outside the states listed above

(and designated southeast) are referred to as national. Subjective bases were used by which schools for this part of the study were chosen for inclusion in the collection of data. State Universities were chosen in most instances, and some schools were added which were of particular interest to the researcher. In mid-summer, 1974, questionnaires were sent to at least one school in each state outside of the southeast, sometimes three or four in a state.

Second, the same number of questionnaires was not sent out in this part of the study as was mailed in the southeast. Questionnaires were sent to a total of sixty-seven schools outside the southeast, and fifty-two were returned, (77 percent).

Power Increase Questionnaire:

In September, 1974, a second questionnaire of six questions went out to those national (25) and southeastern (19) campus radio stations which had indicated in the first questionnaire that they had experienced power increases.

A total of forty-four power increase questionnaires was sent out and sixty-five percent, (gross total of twenty-nine), were returned. Twelve ( 63 percent) were from the southeastern states and seventeen (.68 percent) were national responses.

## II. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

In the southeast and nationally most stations broadcast an appreciable distance from campus. Most stations program for nonstudent as well as student audiences.

In the southeast the greater number of stations program music more than seventy-five percent of each broadcast day. National results show the greater number of stations programming music from half up to three-fourths of their broadcast day.

In the southeast news/talk represents less than ten percent of each program day for the greater number of stations. Nationally, the greater number of stations program over twenty percent news/talk per day. When it comes to programming between ten and twenty percent news/talk daily the southeast leads ( 42 percent ) the national ( 34 percent).

The greater number of stations in the southeast appoint their management. But nationally, the greater number of stations hire their management. In the latter case those hired are professionals and nonstudents.

In the southeast the greater number of stations rely on part-time personnel while nationally the greater number of stations use a combination of full-and-part-time personnel.

Each area uses more maintenance engineers who are staff members than non-staff members. Nationally more of these staff engineers are full-time than part-time as in

the southeast.

Financing in the southeast is predominantly through a variety of ways. Most stations nationally are financed through school appropriations, (a variety of means comes in second nationally while in the southeast school appropriations are the second highest means).

In the southeast the three leading department affiliations are (1) Mass Communications, (2) Speech and, (3) Radio-Television. In the national results the affiliations are (1) Radio-Television, (2) Mass Communications and, (3) Speech, respectively.

The greater number of stations in the southeast and nationally which had experienced power increases had begun as 10-watt stations. Increases in power went as high as 100,000-watts.

The greater number of respondents indicated that increasing coverage area to serve nonstudent listeners as well as students was the prime rationale for power increases.

Educational and otherwise cultural programming to nonstudents and students predominated prior to and after power increases. Half of the southeastern respondents did indicate some program modifications with a power increase while no modifications were predominant from respondents in states outside of the southeast. (However, in the latter case a considerable amount of educational/cultural pro-

gramming to nonstudents and students had been in existence before power increases.)

Results indicate overwhelmingly that schools are licensees in the southeast as well as nationally.

## III. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Key: SE = Southeast
NA = National

| SE | NA | |
|---|---|---|
| | | 1. Your station's normal broadcast radius: |
| 10% | 6% | less than 5 miles |
| 20% | 13% | between 5 and 10 miles |
| 46% | 60% | over 10 miles |
| | | 2. Broadcast hours Monday through Friday: |
| 24% | 10% | less than 12 |
| 27% | 40% | between 12 and 18 |
| 48% | 48% | over 18 |
| | | Broadcast hours weekends: |
| 62% | 73% | same as during weekdays |
| | 15% | more than weekdays |
| 21% | 8% | less than weekdays |
| 10% | | none |
| | | 3. Has your station ever applied for and received a power increase? |
| 29% | 52% | yes |
| 68% | 44% | no |
| | | 4. If your station has increased power, was your programming modified? |
| | 21% | not applicable |
| 7% | 28% | yes |
| 17% | 23% | no |
| | | 5. To whom do you predominantly program? |
| 39% | 4% | students only |
| 55% | 92% | students and nonstudents of city/county |
| | | 6. Percentage of music programmed per day: |
| 4% | 4% | less than 50 percent |
| 34% | 52% | between 50 and 75 percent |
| 60% | 42% | more than 75 percent |
| | | 7. Percentage of news and talk programmed per day: |
| 41% | 17% | less than 10 percent |
| 42% | 34% | between 10 and 20 percent |
| 16% | 48% | more than 20 percent |
| | | 8. To whom are you immediately held responsible in the operation of your station? |
| 20% | 25% | department chairperson |
| 20% | 17% | school dean |
| 20% | 19% | specially designated communications group/office |
| 40% | 42% | other |

| SE | NA | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 9. | How is your station management selected? |
| 9% | 13% | | student elections |
| 55% | 29% | | appointed |
| 24% | 67% | | hired |
| 14% | 4% | | other |
| | | 10. | Personnel: |
| 4% | 17% | | full-time |
| 54% | 27% | | part-time |
| 34% | 60% | | combination full and part |
| 6% | 23% | | other |
| | | 11. | Maintenance Engineer: |
| 54% | 85% | | staff-member |
| 45% | 25% | | nonstaff |
| | | 12. | How is your station financed? |
| 26% | 15% | | student funds only |
| 30% | 56% | | school appropriations |
| 19% | 17% | | combination student and school appropriations |
| 33% | 48% | | other |
| | | 13. | Is your station independent from or affiliated with a department/office on campus? |
| 48% | 54% | | independent |
| 51% | 52% | | affiliated |
| 13% | 12% | | Speech |
| 3% | 8% | | Journalism |
| 10% | 20% | | Radio-TV |
| 13% | 14% | | Mass Comm |
| 4% | 4% | | Univ Public Relations |
| 13% | 4% | | Other |